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Human Resource Development in Tourism and Hospitality Entrepreneurship: A Focus on Homestays in Manipur

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Abstract

Homestays are a vital component of the tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry, offering distinctive experiences while contributing to income generation for host communities. This study examines the role of Human Resource Development (HRD) in leveraging homestay entrepreneurship to promote economic growth and development in Manipur. Despite its potential, Manipur's T&H industry lacks adequate awareness about the economic benefits of homestays through entrepreneurship and the essential skills required to manage them effectively. Based on secondary data, this study underscores the importance of HRD for homestay operations through entrepreneurship to empower local communities, enhance their quality of life, and stimulate tourism-driven economic development. Findings highlight how skill development, training and capacity-building initiatives contribute to the professionalization of homestay enterprises while also empowering host communities, particularly youth, to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The study emphasizes the need to prioritize awareness campaigns, training programs, and the adoption of emerging trends in the T&H industry to promote homestay development in Manipur.

Keywords: *Homestay, Income generation, Skills, Economic prosperity, Entrepreneurship*

INTRODUCTION

Homestay is the latest trend that has recently emerged in Manipur's tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry. Homestays have their primary emphasis on amenities, service, and perceived value. Homestay operations are usually run by individuals who have vacant space. Every year, there is an ongoing spike in the number of tourists who prefer to spend time in alternative accommodations. People choose homestay accommodation to avoid the excessive noise and bustle of town hotels and to spend some alone time unwinding and reconnecting with themselves. The homeowner's presence on the property, which gives guests a personal touch, is what makes homestays special (Kline et al., 2013). For tourists who are distant from home, it provides a warmth and cozy environment (Kumar et al., 2023). Homestay gives people a chance to fully experience diverse traditions, such as through traditional festivals and local crafts.

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the development and long-term viability of homestays, since it fosters creativity, self-employment, and community involvement. Despite the surge of interest in homestays, many owners experience obstacles, and entrepreneurship helps them grow and develop. The success of homestays largely depends on the skills, knowledge, and management abilities of the people involved. By providing exceptional service, it leads to satisfied customers who are more likely to return and spread the word (Sarma et al., 2025). This signifies the importance of Human Resource Development (HRD) in

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improving service quality, communication skills, and Manipur's overall T&H marketplace standards. However, HRD has since been widely discussed in every field, regardless of size, public or private, and has initiated its systems and practices.

Homestay entrepreneurs, who manage and operate homestays for income. Homestay provides considerable benefits and impacts on socio-economic status (Kulshreshtha et al., 2019 & Kumar et al., 2023). The primary problem in operating a homestay is failing to consistently generate monthly income (Yassin & Ramlan, 2015). Many studies show that homestay is still in its infancy in Manipur. Since there is limited infrastructure and low homestay availability, planners and policymakers must urgently put forward a tourism and hospitality development program. In the NITI Aayog 2025 report on "Rethinking Homestays: Navigating Policy Pathways" also mentioned that homestays and bed & breakfast (B&B) are a growing trend, and the regulatory structure is inconsistent across different states. Homestays can improve the living standard of the local communities by providing an alternative source of income. A study

conducted in 2021 found that 72% of the Indians travellers support local communities through tourism, including rural homestays. Besides, the younger generation of tourists (Gen Z and Millennials) looks for genuine, immersive, and environmentally friendly local experiences. Entrepreneurs who operate homestays are aware of the value of effective management. Thus, they operate with accountability by organizing, planning, and managing the activities to ensure guest satisfaction and providing exceptional services (Devadas & Jayasooriya 2021).

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the importance of HRD in managing and improving homestays in Manipur.
2. To examine how entrepreneurship contributes to the growth and development of homestay.
3. To suggest ways to improve HRD for better growth of homestays in Manipur.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Agyeiwaah et al. (2013) stated in their study that the practice of hosting tourists in homestays in tourism destinations is becoming trendy across the world. Also, it is now used as a means for community development. The study revealed that hosting guests in homestays helps the host families by giving them the chance to socialize, preserve their local traditions, earn income, and create jobs. And concluded the challenges faced by the homestay owners, which include the nature of the seasonality of the homestay business, cultural disorientation, insecurity, and delays in payments.

Bhan & Com (2014) stated that homestay is a micro-entrepreneurship in the T&H industry. Additionally, the government also played the role of a facilitator. The private sector and local communities must be involved in the promotion of tourism.

Bhalla et al. (2016) investigated how the involvement of locals in a homestay program can impact their views and actions toward the goals of ecotourism in a conservation area. Although the study pointed out that the way people feel about the homestay program is greatly influenced by factors like a person's job. The homestay program has supported communities in protecting their surroundings; more efforts are needed to encourage further conservation. And to develop and expand these initiatives, public and private sectors must collaborate to accomplish more.

Choudhury et al. (2018) stated that the northeastern region is a potential market for the tourism and hospitality industry. In this region, for the development of the tourism and hospitality industry, marketing is

much needed. However, the study mentioned that there is a lack of advertisements. If the local people have ideas on homestay, the study points out that homestay is the best option to develop the living standard and to increase the livelihood of the local communities.

Kumar et al. (2023) stated about the concept of homestay. The study also emphasized the potential benefits of homestays for family businesses. For tourists who are distant from home, it provides a warm and cozy environment. The study also highlighted the problems and role of tourism. Boosting tourism and connecting it with homestays presents significant opportunities for environmental, infrastructural, and socio-economic improvements.

Thomas et al. (2023) in their paper discussed the promotion of homestay entrepreneurship in Manipur. Compared to rural areas, most of the homestays are in urban areas, and few of them hire employees, especially in urban areas. The study also mentioned the cultural preservation by the locals while the urban homestays were compromised; farm-to-table experiences and the use of solar panels are two eco-friendly practices that homestays are promoting in Manipur.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper adopts a descriptive approach employing secondary data to analyse HRD in T&H entrepreneurship of homestays. This paper is supported by secondary data published in several scholarly studies and reports from government websites.

HRD IN HOMESTAYS

Homestays have long been popular as a trending alternative accommodation in every tourist destination. Tourists opted for homestays because of the friendly environment, reasonable price, authentic sense of belonging, and interaction with the host (Gunasekharan & Anandkumar, 2012). According to Akhilesh et al. (2026), socially responsible marketing integrates ethical responsibility, stakeholder welfare, and environmental sustainability into business practices. Homestay entrepreneurship aligns with these principles because it promotes community participation, cultural preservation, sustainable livelihood, and responsible tourism development. The study further highlights that transparency, community engagement, and sustainability are important dimensions of socially responsible business operations. Homestays also have the potential to mitigate unemployment and promote community-based tourism by providing local experiences to the guest (Singh et al., 2024). Therefore, the state needs a training program for HRD for homestays so that tourism and hospitality can grow even more. Homestay motivates the host community to actively support and be more responsible for activities related to tourism and hospitality, not only homestay entrepreneurship. However, such efforts could possibly thrive through more partnerships between public and private organizations (Bhalla et al., 2016). The local people have minimal knowledge of homestays and an overall absence of experience and skills in management. Continuous training, digital literacy, and skill development are increasingly important in the modern tourism industry due to technological transformation and Artificial Intelligence integration (Akhilesh & Kumar, 2025). HRD programs improve communication, customer service, and hospitality management skills in homestays.

In India, the terms homestay and B&B are used interchangeably (Choudhary & Rai, 2007). However, there were a few differences between B&B and homestays. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has taken the initiative and developed a specific program called “Incredible India Bed and Breakfast/Homestay Establishments”. This program makes an effort to establish a standard framework for homestays across the country. Homestays are categorized according to the facilities offered, which vary from one state to another.

To encourage the establishment of homestays in rural areas, the Manipur government has decided to incorporate them in its state tourism policy (Bhuyan & Deka, 2019). And a very few people are

operating homestays (Choudhury et al., 2018). In 2020, the Manipur government released common standards and guidelines for classifying bed & breakfast and homestay establishments to regularize facilities, offer hygienic and budget-friendly accommodations, and let tourists experience Manipur's varied cuisine and culture. According to the Manipur tourism guidelines, homestay establishments are classified as premium, deluxe, and standard according to the facilities they offer.

The Manipur Tourism Policy 2022 also mentioned implementing HRD, training, and capacity-building programs at the grassroots level. Subsequently, the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) initiated a capacity-building workshop, which has been conducted under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance Scheme, a World Bank-supported program to enhance the skills and knowledge of homestay owners and empower individuals interested in establishing and operating homestays. During the workshop, the trainers covered nine topics, and the participants visited homestays as part of a site visit. The discussed topics are given below:

S. No.	Topics
1.	Introduction to Homestays
2.	Homestay Setup and Operations
3.	Guest Experience and Relations
4.	Food and Beverage Management
5.	Sustainability and Responsible Tourism
6.	Marketing and Promotion
7.	Financial Management of Homestays
8.	Safety and Security
9.	MSME Scheme for Homestay Entrepreneurs

Homestays provide both direct and indirect benefits to the surrounding community. While also delivering an immersive cultural and social experience to the tourists, to sustain a viable economy for the local communities, homestays are often clubbed with other community-based tourism activities like camping, trekking, bird watching, showcasing of traditional culture and festivals. Thus, local communities should be given basic training and skills to know this industry. The expansion of tourism and hospitality through homestay directly impacts the livelihood of the local communities, as well as having negative impacts on the host community (Pandey et al., 1995). However, overall, it helps to level up living standards and economic development of the state.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ROLE IN HOMESTAY

Homestay is a type of micro entrepreneurship (Bhan & Com, 2014), and a community-based tourism. Homestay is the process of converting a residential place for commercial use and generating income. For underdeveloped economies, homestays provide the local communities with invaluable incomes (Gautam, 2024); homestay entrepreneurship has been considered a perfect choice for necessities with minimal financial investment. Apart from India, Wanhill (2004) also mentioned that, even in Europe, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are also supported by policymakers. It’s a common misconception that large enterprises

consider small enterprise markets as unprofitable. Additionally, the markets are too small and typically more competitive and support economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurs. One common argument is that new enterprises can't compete with more established ones without some sort of financial backer. Since local communities own and operate the homestays, they directly benefited economically and in additional ways, making them useful in encouraging entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. Besides, homestays require a clear marketing plan to be widely advertised; marketing can be done through the government, local communities, and tourists themselves, and each of them can promote homestays (Choudhury et al., 2018). Without appropriate initiatives and government support, nothing is achievable, so the desired stakeholders must come forward and take initiative, and the government needs to frame a comprehensive policy (Sanyal et al., 2023 & Devi et al., 2024).

By nature, a homestay entrepreneur is a service provider, owned and operated by themselves to support social benefits (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Homestay also supports gender equality, particularly by empowering women as micro-entrepreneurs. Recently, there has been a growth in interest in social enterprise, specifically in the T&H industry. The concept of social entrepreneurship is its emphasis on increasing social value rather than profits to owners or shareholders (Zahra et al., 2009). Advances in social entrepreneurship can have a ripple effect towards responsible tourism.

While a list of homestays is available on the tourism website, many more are not listed there but are spotted on booking websites such as MakeMyTrip, Booking.com, Goibibo, Yatra, Agoda, and Cleartrip. The listed homestays in tourism website are:

Table 1: List of homestays

S. No.	Name of the homestay
1.	The Nest, Game Village ZONE-II Meitei
2.	Budha Loktak Homestay by the Loktak homestays & hospitality services
3.	Manipur Royal Holidays Homestay
4.	Iranyai
5.	Manipur house (Nepram trading private Ltd.)
6.	Loktak Aquamarine Homestay
7.	Nature's Retreat
8.	Magen
9.	Sangai yarek shang
10.	The cascade retreat
11.	Iboton homestays
12.	Maipakchao family homestay
13.	Nganuleima homestay
14.	Ibohalbi homestay
15.	Eco Heritage Villa

Source: https://manipurtourism.gov.in/

The geographical areas of the homestay that are listed on the tourism website are specified in Fig. 1

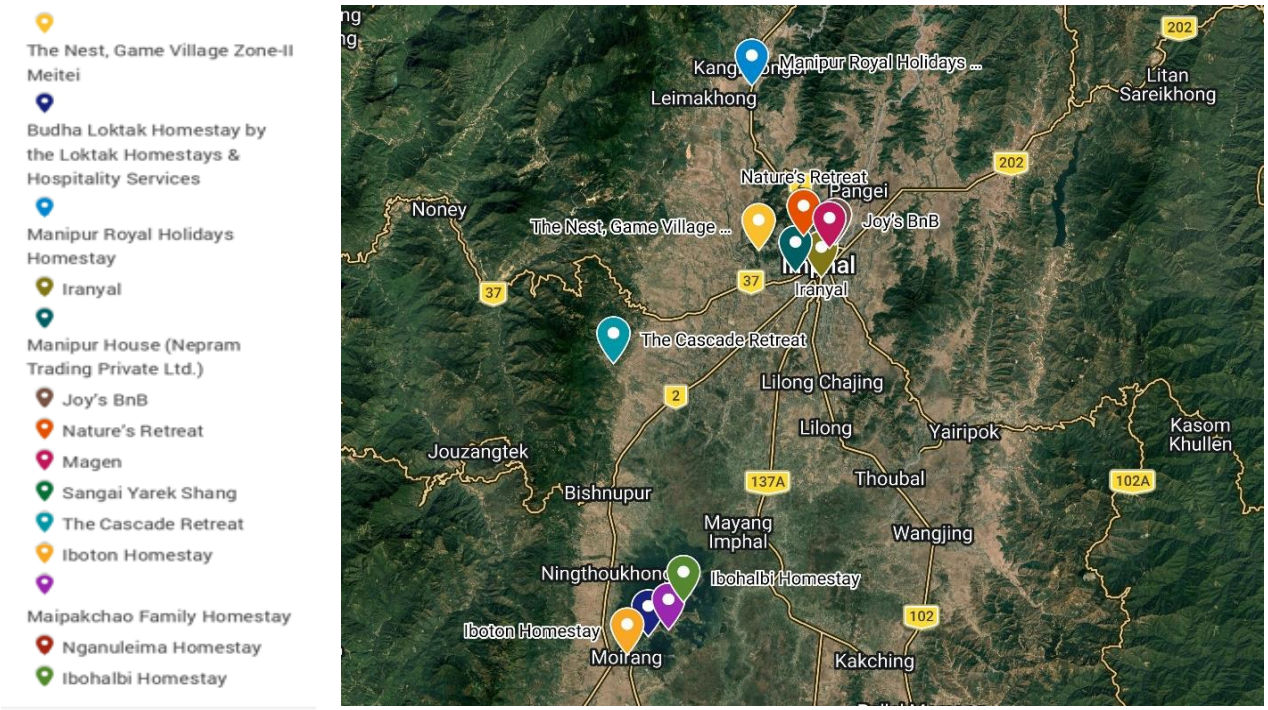

Fig. 1 Google map of the homestays
Source: https://www.google.com/maps

To arrange the 4th Shirui Lily Festival, 2022, the Manipur Tourism Department identified 41 other homestays in the Ukhrul district headquarters, Langdang, and Shirui Village and categorized them as deluxe, classic, standard, and dormitory.

Since families operate most of the homestays, there aren't many other employees. The primary motives of homestay entrepreneurs are to pursue further entrepreneurial passions and to generate more income and reduce unemployment in the host community. The limited financial resources that are available to homestay entrepreneurs, along with their low-level awareness of developments, may lead to a lack of training opportunities**.** Besides, homestays are Small-Scale Enterprises that have no plans to hire employees. These types of businesses often lack organized human resources departments that have the skills to handle issues related to human resources.

CHALLENGES OF HOMESTAY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Homestay owners faced difficulty in maintaining the standards.
- There is a barrier in cross-cultural understanding and language problems.
- Homestay entrepreneurs experienced competition with unregistered homestay operators.
- The ministry and the state tourism department are not paying enough attention in homestays entrepreneurship.
- There is a shortage of HRD programs to manage homestays.
- There were no proper security systems and deteriorating law-and-order conditions.
- The absence of proper branding and marketing makes it difficult for homestay owners to promote their properties.

OPPORTUNITY OF HOMESTAY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. Economic Opportunities

- By providing the communities with a reliable source of income, homestays allow them to improve their standard of living.
- Supports the inflow of foreign exchange to local communities and contributes to the overall economy of the state.
- Promoting small-scale enterprises in the tourism and hospitality industry and its numerous associated sectors.
- Advantages to the economy include consuming food, accommodation, and spending money on other activities.
- By bringing up locally made goods, such as handicrafts, homestays support local economies of the host community.

2. Social Opportunities

- Homestay can serve as a platform for cross-cultural exchanges.
- Homestay can provide a source of livelihood to the youth by involving them in local opportunities.
- Acquiring the ability to learn new languages builds confidence in the local people.
- Opens up new avenues for learning new skills such as customer service, marketing, and communication skills.
- Increased social bonding among people of different backgrounds can help reduce social differences.
- According to Akhilesh et al. (2025), community participation and cultural heritage are important for sustainable homestay tourism development.

FINDINGS

- A lack of literature pertaining to homestay research is seen.
- There was no proper marketing or promotion of homestays.
- Homestay can be a key driver for rural poverty alleviation.
- Homestays significantly enhance the socioeconomic well-being of the local communities.
- Lack of T&H education results in a shortage of skilled human resources and knowledge about the homestay entrepreneurship.
- Lack of structured legal regulations with respect to homestay registration and other relevant policies.
- The absence of coordination between various T&H stakeholders, including locals, homestay operators, and the government.
- Local communities have limited knowledge and awareness about the homestay entrepreneurship and the T&H industry.
- The primary motive for people to engage in homestay entrepreneurship is to improve their financial well-being, and the obstacle to operating a homestay is the inability to maintain their monthly earnings.

SUGGESTIONS

- Marketing and promotion of homestays need to be scaled up.
- Strategic development policies and awareness campaigns need to be intensified to ensure a sustainable homestay experience.

- Capacity-building programs for homestay operators need to be held regularly to empower them and ensure success in the long term.
- The homestay database needs to be developed to offer tourists a quick browse and select their stay.
- The government should provide loan subsidies and incentives to homestay owners.
- Local people of homestay destinations should offer training in cleanliness and hospitality to ensure that visitors have a wholesome and enriching experience.
- Strong cooperation between the government, the private sector, and local communities is needed to enhance the development of homestays.
- Government schemes for establishing homestays at the village/community level need to be properly implemented.
- More emphasis should be placed on the "Farm to table" approach to make homestay operations more sustainable and to give a unique flavour to the tourists.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

i. **Contribution to the Literature**
   This study contributes to T&H literature, extending HRD concepts related to informal micro-entrepreneurship, an area that has often been understudied.
ii. **Public & Private Sector Collaboration**
   The state tourism department and private stakeholders can work together to facilitate HRD training programs, allocate financial loans, and set up infrastructure for homestay entrepreneurs.
iii. **Digital Upgradation**
   This study can amplify the official state tourism website to list and promote homestays, consequently eliminating the digital visibility gap.
iv. **Awareness Programs**
   This study can help the state tourism department to facilitate more community workshops and capacity-building programs, coordinating with the local community to convey the economic benefits of homestay entrepreneurship in the development of the T&H industry.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The analysis of the study is based on existing literature. Moreover, this study is limited to the homestays listed on the website of the Manipur tourism. To address this limitation, future researchers can conduct a quantitative and qualitative approach based on primary data collection through a survey and in-depth interview method in a wide range and can study further why all the homestays are not available on the website. The study also identified the lack of standardized HRD training programs and very limited knowledge regarding hospitality skills and homestay entrepreneurship. To bridge this gap, future research can collaborate with local governments and related stakeholders to investigate the design structure of training initiatives and measure their direct impact on host performance over time. Barring these critical gaps, this study provides a strategic roadmap for future research in Manipur's T&H industry development.

CONCLUSION

HRD programs in homestay entrepreneurship are necessary in advancing the tourism and hospitality industry. In Manipur, homestays are still at an initial stage. Lack of participation from the community, poor planning and inadequate development programs from the authorities hold one of the most important hurdles in developing homestays. Awareness needs to be scaled up among the local people on how homestay can serve as a sustainable source of livelihood. To provide an immersive cultural and social experience to the tourists and to sustain a viable economy for the local communities, homestays are often clubbed with other

community-based tourism activities. HRD training programs from the authorities can help in upskilling and reskilling the host community in establishing and managing the homestays. Homestay entrepreneurship has the potential to uplift the host community and strengthen the T&H industry of the state.

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